

Message Text

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INFO USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HONG KONG 10384

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CORRECT OMISSION PARA 1.)

FOR EA/PRCM ARMSTRONG FROM OSBORN

EO 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR CH

SUBJ: PRC FOREIGN POLICY GOALS--A SPECULATIVE ASSESSMENT

REF: HONG KONG 9796; HONG KONG 10070

SUMMARY: A) PRC DIPLOMACY DIRECTS AN EXTRAORDINARY AMOUNT OF EFFORT AGAINST THE USSR. IT IS SOMETIMES PLAUSIBLY (BUT, I THINK, MISTAKENLY) SUGGESTED THAT THE PRC HOPES THEREBY TO ACHIEVE A STABLE EQUILIBRIUM AMONG THE GREAT POWERS. A MORE PERSUASIVE CASE CAN BE MADE THAT, WITHOUT REGARD TO EQUILIBRIUM, IT IS THE OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE OF PRC DIPLOMACY TO REDUCE THE PROBABILITY OF A SOVIET MILITARY ATTACK ON CHINA. I QUESTION THE ACCURACY OF THIS ANALYSIS, TOO. WHILE PEKING HAS REALIZED SINCE 1969 THAT THE MAJOR MILITARY THREAT TO PRC SECURITY COMES FROM THE USSR, THE FUNDAMENTAL CHINESE POSITION IS THAT THEY CAN AND MUST RELY FOR PROTECTION, NOT ON DIPLOMACY, BUT UPON THEIR OWN STRENGTH AND RESOLUTION.

B) I BELIEVE THAT THE PRIMARY MEDIUM-TERM OBJECTIVE OF THE PRC'S ANTI-SOVIET DIPLOMACY IS TO WEAKEN THE SOVIET POSITION IN THE PREDOMINATELY NATIONALISTIC AND IDEOLOGICAL SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE, WITH ENHANCEMENT OF PRC MILITARY SECURITY AN ANCILLARY BENEFIT. CONFIDENTIAL

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IN THE LONG TERM THE PRC SEEKS, IN ALLIANCE WITH THE AWAKENING THIRD WORLD, TO FURTHER THE MUTUAL SELF-DESTRUCTION OF THE "IMPERIALISTS", BOTH CAPITALIST AND "SOCIALIST". ONE MAY, OF COURSE, QUESTION HOW SINCERELY CHOU EN-LAI OR TOHER INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

SHARE THIS FORMAL MBONSENSUS GOAL; BUT THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE THAT THEY FEEL THE NEED TO KEEP PRC FOREIGN POLICIES AT LEAST MINIMALLY COMPATIBLE WITH IT. AT ANY RATE, I BELIEVE THE DECLARED CONSENSUS GOAL IS SO DEEPLY ROOTED IN CHINESE NATIONALISM AND CHINESE-STYLE "SOCIALISM" THAT IT WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO CONDITION PRC FOREIGN POLICY EVEN AFTER MAO AND CHOU ARE GONE.

C) CHINA IS THUS LIKELY FOR SOME TIME TO REMAIN A "REVOLUTIONARY" FORCE WITH RESPECT TO BOTH THE US AND USSR; HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT MEAN EXTERNAL AGGRESSION, NOR DOES IT EVEN NECESSARILY IMPLY EXTENSIVE MATERIAL SUPPORT OF INSURGENCIES. WHILE COMPETITION WITH THE SOVIETS CAN SOMETIMES IMPEL THE CHINESE TO SUPPORT INSURGENTS, IT CAN ALSO IMPEL THEM THE OTHER WAY. FURTHER, IT IS PRC DOCTRINE THAT REVOLUTIONS SHOULD ARISE FROM WITHIN A COUNTRY. FINALLY, WHILE THE PRC MUST SEEK TO KEEP ITS FOREIGN POLICIES IN LINE WITH IDEOLOGY, THE PRC LEADERS ARE NOT WITHOUT LATITUDE. THERE ARE NUMEROUS PRAGMATIC NATIONAL INTERESTS THAT THE PRC MUST SEEK TO ADVANCE THROUGH BILATERAL DIPLOMACY, AND THESE INTERESTS ARE IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES CAPABLE OF OUTWEIGHING IDEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS. OUR OWN DIPLOMACY SHOULD IN MY OPINION BE DESIGNED TO APPEAL PRIMARILY TO PRC PRAGMATIC NATIONAL INTERESTS, THOUGH THE GEOPOLITICAL DIMENSIONS SHOULD NOT OF COURSE BE NEGLECTED. END SUMMARY

1. THERE HAVE BEEN CONSIDERABLE GROUNDS IN PRC BEHAVIOR, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE 1972 NIXON VISIT, FOR SPECULATING THAT THE MAIN GOAL OF CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY HAS BECOME A "BALANCE OF POWER", NOT JUST IN THE RATHER LOOSE SENSE OF PLAYING ONE POWER OFF AGAINST ANOTHER (AS CHINA HAS TRADITIONALLY DONE), BUT EVEN IN THE SENSE OF A STABLE EQUILIBRIUM AMONG THE FIVE GREAT POWERS. THE PRC HAS, FOR EXAMPLE, PRESSED EUROPEANS TO MAINTAIN MAXIMUM PREPAREDNESS AGAINST THE USSR, WARNING THEM NOT TO LET THE US WITHDRAW ITS FORCES. EVEN IN ASIA, THOUGH SOMEWHAT AMBIVALENTLY, THE PRC HAS SOUGHT TO AVERT THE REMOVAL OF US FORCES IN CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MIGHT "CREATE A VACUUM" FOR THE SOVIETS TO FILL. IT HAS APPEARED TO ENDORSE THE US-JAPAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP, AS WELL AS THE DEVELOPMENT BY JAPAN OF ITS OWN DEFENSE FORCES. IT CONFIDENTIAL

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HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY APPARENT SINCE 1969 THAT THE PRC PERCEIVES THE OBJECTIVE FACT THAT THE USSR REPRESENTS MORE OF A MILITARY THREAT TO CHINA THAN DOES THE US. THUS THE RECURRENT PRC STRESS ON THE SOVIET MILITARY THREAT, PROVIDING THE CONTEXT FOR THREE THRUSTS OF PRC DIPLOMACY, HAS MADE IT PLAUSIBLE TO SUPPOSE THAT THE PRC OBJECTIVE IS TO ENHANCE ITS OWN SECURITY BY FURTHERING THE DEVELOPMENT

OF A STABLE EQUILIBRIUM AMONG THE US, THE USSR, WESTERN EUROPE, JAPAN, AND THE PRC.

2. THE REPORT DELIVERED AT THE TENTH PARTY CONGRESS BY CHOU EN-LAI DOES NOT SUPPORT THE THESIS THAT PRC FOREIGN POLICY AIMS AT A STABLE EQUILIBRIUM. INDEED, CHOU'S REPORT READS RATHER LIKE A

REFUTATION OF CHARGES THAT HE HAS ADOPTED A STATUS-QUO ORIENTED BALANCE-OF-POWER POLICY. THE REPORT STRONGLY AFFAIRMS THAT CHINA'S NATURAL ALLIES ARE THE "PEOPLE" AND THE AWAKENING AND GROWING THIRLD WORLD; AND WHILE CHINESE DIPLOMACY MAY SEEK TO EXPLOIT COMPRO-MISES AND MAKE DEALS WITH AN "ENEMY", THIS IS ONLY TO ENCOMPASS THE EVENTUAL SELF-DESTRUCTION OF ALL ENEMIES. THE REPORT PORTRAYS THE US AND USSR, NOT AS ELEMENTS IN AN EQUILIBRIUM WITH JAPAN, EUROPE, AND CHINA, BUT MORE IN THE IRREVERSIBLY ANTAGONISTIC ROLES OF GINGHAM DOG AND CALICO CAT. VICE FOREIGN MINISTER CH'IAO KUAN-HUA'S ADDRESS AT THE UNGA, WITH DUE ALLOWANCE FOR THE DIFFERENCE IN AUDIENCES, IS THROOUGHLY CONSISTENT WITH CHOU'S REPORT IN AFFIRMING THAT THE PRC GOAL, RATHER THAN EQUILIBRIUM, IS EVENTUAL SELF-DESTRUCTION OF THE IMPERIALISTS. CH'IAO'S SPEECH IN ADDITION REJECTS ANY DEPENDENCE UPON OUTSIDERS (SPECIFICALLY THE US) FOR CHINA'S PROTECTION.

3. OF COURSE, IN THE HIGHLY POLITICAL CONTEXT OF A PARTY CONGRESS, ORTHODOXY HAS TO BE TAKEN AT A DISCOUNT. THUS IN THEORY CHOU (AND, IN HIS DIFFERENT CONTEXT, CH'IAO) MIGHT SIMPLY HAVE BEEN USING THE LANGUAGE OF ORTHODOXY TO PRESENT, AND TO BROADEN SUPPORT FOR, PRAGMATIC POLICIES IN SUPPORT OF A STABLE POWER EQUILIBRIUM. OR IT MIGHT BE SUPPOSED THAT CHOU AND CH'IAO WERE COMPELLED BY FORCE MAJEURE TO SPEAK AS THEY DID. IT WOULD TAKE A MIND READER TO SAY WHAT WAS PASSING THROUGH CHOU'S AND CH'IOA'S MINDS AS THEY READ THEIR SPEECHES. BUT WHATEVER THE MENTAL SET OF INDIVIDUAL PRC LEADERS, THERE IS WHAT SEEMS TO ME STRONG CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE THAT THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF CURRENT PRC DIPLOMACY IS NEITHER THE CREATION OF A STABLE EQUILIBRIUM NOR EVEN MILITARY SECURITY.
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4. WHILE CHOU DID NOT EXPLICITLY REJECT US SUPPORT FOR CHINA'S SECURITY, HE CERTAINLY DISPLAYED NO GRATITUDE FOR IT. CHOU'S REPORT CITES THE "YEAR OF EUROPE" AS EVIDENCE THAT DESPITE THE BREZHNEV

VISIT, CONTENTION FOR HEGEMONY, WITH EUROPE AS THE BONE, IS STILL THE ORDER OF THE DAY BETWEEN THE US AND USSR. MENTION OF THE "YEAR OF EUROPE" COMES IN THE CONTEXT OF CHOU'S CHARGE THAT THE "WEST" IS ALWAYS TRYING TO DIVERT THE SOVIET PERIL EASTWARD, AGAINST CHINA, SO THERE IS AN OVERTONE OF RESENTMENT AGAINST THE US IN THE CITATION. CH'IAO SPEECH IS MORE EXPLICIT IN ITS DENUNCIATION OF THE BREZHNEV VISIT, INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY THE US-USSR AGREEMENT OF PREVENTING NUCLEAR WAR, AND HE BLUNTLY SPURNS WHATEVER DEGREE OF REINFORCEMENT OF CHINA'S SECURITY MIGHT HAVE BEEN PROVIDED BY THE AGREEMENT. THAT DEGREE WAS, OBJECTIVELY SPEAKING QUITE SMALL, BUT IT NEED NOT HAVE BEEN WILFULLY DEPRECIATED; CHOU AND CHIAO COULD EASILY HAVE CALLED ATTENTION TO THE DANGERS OF "FALSE DETENTE" AND DIRECTED THEIR FIRE AT OTHER ASPECTS OF THE BREZHNEV VISIT. TO ME THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE CHINESE DO NOT WANT PEACE THROUGH EQUILIBRIUM, OR EVEN PROTECTION, AS MUCH AS THEY WANT THE GINGHAM DOG AND CALICO CAT TO KEEP AT IT.

5. COMMENT: IT MAY BE OBJECTED THAT THE CHINESE, BY DEPRECIATING THE NUCLEAR WAR PREVENTION AGREEMENT AND REJECTING THE NUCLEAR UMBRELLA", HAVE NOT REALLY THROWN ANYTHING AWAY, OR CHANGED ANYTHING OF SUBSTANCE, AS THE AGREEMENT STILL EXISTS. HOWEVER, THE PRINCIPAL VALUE THE AMERICAN CONNECTION HAS FOR CHINA AS A DETERRENT AGAINST A SOVIET ATTACK PRESUMABLY STEMS FROM WHATEVER DEGREE OF UNCERTAINTY IT INTRODUCES INTO THE CALCULATIONS OF SOVIET MILITARY PLANNERS. IF THE SOVIETS WERE PLANNING AN ATTACK ON CHINA, THEY WOULD PROBABLY, ON RATIONAL GROUNDS, DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY OF US INTERVENTION ON THE SIDE OF CHINA, BUT (SO IT HAS BEEN ARGUED) THEY CANNOT BE ENTIRELY SURE OF US NON-INTERVENTION, ESPECIALLY IF TIES OF MUTUAL SYMPATHY EXIST BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA. THE US-USSR NWP AGREEMENT, BY PROVIDING A THEORETICAL BASIS FOR AT LEAST VERBAL INTERVENTION BY THE US, marginally strengthened this deterrent value of the SINO-US CONNECTION. CH'IAO'S SPEECH REJECTS THIS MARGINAL REINFORCEMENT EXPLICITLY; AND THE RELATIVE COOLNESS BOTH HE AND CHOU DISPLAYED TOWARD THE US DOES NOT USGGEST AN OVERRIDING CONCERN EVEN FOR THE PRESERVATION OF OUR TIES OF MUTUAL SYMPATHY.

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6. BEYOND SUCH INFERENCES FROM THE CHOU AND CH'IAO TEXTS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE GENERAL FOREIGN POLICY LINE SUGGESTED IN THEIR SPEECHES (IE REVOLUTIONARY LONG-TERM GOALS; AUTARKY IN DEFENSE) IS CONSIDERABLY MORE CONSISTENT WITH BASIC INTERNAL DYNAMICS OF CHINA THAN WOULD BE THE CASE WITH A POLICY DIRECTED AT SECURITY THROUGH AN EQUILIBRIUM OF POWER OR EVEN THROUGH ASSOCIATION WITH THE US. IT WOULD BE REPUNGENT TO CHINA'S NATIONALISTIC AMOUR PROPRE TO HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE ANY LONG-TERM DEPENDENCE FOR CHINA'S SECURITY UPON ANY OUTSIDE POWER OR SOMBINATION OF POWERS, (THOUGH TEMPORARY APPLICATION OF POWER-POLITICAL TACTICS, WITH CHINA AS THE MANIPULATOR, COULD BE ACCEPTED). A MORE CONGENIAL LINE WOULD BE SELF-RELIANCE, WITH A TINGE OF XENOPHOBIA. FURTHER, MAOISM, DESPITE DEALS AND COMPROMISES WITH LESSER-

EVEL BOURGEOIS FORCES ALONG THE WAY, HAS SOUGHT DOMESTICALLY TO PROMOTE REVOLUTION BY MOBILIZING THE UNDERPRIVILEGED AGAINST INEQUALITIES OF RANK AND PRIVILEGE, AND THIS IS WHAT CHOU'S REPORT HAS CHINA DOING EXTERNALLY.

7. IF THE PRC IS NOT TRYING TO ESTABLISH A STABLE BALANCE OF POWER, OR EVEN, AS ITS MAIN DIPLOMATIC GOAL, TO PREVENT A SOVIET ATTACK ON CHINA, THEN WHAT IS ITS MOTIVE IN SUPPORTING A STRONG NATO AND ACQUIESCING IN A CONTINUED US MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE PACIFIC? I DO NOT RULE OUT AS PART OF THE PRC'S CALCULATIONS THE HOPE THAT A STRONG NATO, BY KEEPING THE USSR OFF BALANCE, MIGHT STILL FURTHER REDUCE AN ALREADY SMALL PROBABILITY OF A MASSIVE SOVIET ATTACK. BUT I BELIEVE THAT THE PRC ACCORDS MUCH HIGHER PRIORITY TO THE NATIONALISTIC-IDEOLOGICAL GOAL OF DEFEATING THE SOVIETS(OR AT LEAST AVERTING A SOVIET VOCTORY) IN THE SINO-SOVIET
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DISPUTE. THE PARTICULAR CHINESE CONCEPTION OF "SOCIALISM", WITH ITS EXTREME STRESS ON RADICAL EGALITARIANISM, HAS BECOME A CENTRAL PART OF THE SELF-IMAGE, OR THE "EGO", OF THE PEKING REGIME. THE MAJOR DOMESTIC ENEMY OF "SOCIALISM" CHINESE STYLE IS THE TENDENCY TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIVILEGED ELITE; AND THE USSR IS THE EXTERNAL ARCHTYPE AND CITADEL OF THIS DEGENERATE FORM OF SOCIALISM. THE CHINESE LEADERS DO NOT SEEM INTENT ONIMPOSING THEIR OWN FORM OF "SOCIALISM" ON OTHERS, BUT THEY CERTAINLY WISH THEIR IDEAS TO HAVE A FAIR CHANCE TO PROPAGATE THEMSELVES WITHIN THE BLOC AND THE THIRD WORLD. THIS THE SOVIETS ARE EQUALLY DETERMINED TO PREVENT, AND THEIR ARROGANT ASSERATION OF THE ARBITER'S ROLE IN THE SOCIALIST CAMP IS PARTICULARLY INTOLERABLE TO THE CHINESE, WITH THEIR LONG HISTORY OF HUMILIATION AT THE HANDS OF FOREIGNERS.

8. BASED ON PRESENTINDICATIONS, ONE MUST CONCLUDE THAT THE KIND OF PRC POSTURE SUGGESTED IN THE TENTH CONGRESS SPEECHES HAS AT LEAST AS GOOD CHANCE OF SURVIVING CHOU AND MAO--INDEED, OF CONTINUING AS LONG AS "SOCIALISM" CHINESE-STYLE RETAINS ITS SPECIAL FEATURES. HOWEVER, AT SOME POINT, THE STRAIN ON CHINA'S PRODUCTIVE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY OF THE RECURRENT UPHEAVALS NECESSARY TO COMBAT "REVISIONISM" AND UPROOT SPECIAL PRIVILEGE MAY BECOME TOO SEVERE TO BE CONTINUED. SUCH A CHANGE, MARKING THE END OF CHINA'S "SOCIALISM" IN THE UNIQUE FORM IN WHICH WE KNOW IT TODAY, WOULD BOTH PERMIT THE PRC TO TAPER OFF ITS DISPUTE WITH THE USSR, ASSUMING A MEASURE OF RECIPROCAL GOOD WILL ON THE SOVIET SIDE, AND ALSO ALLOW THE PRC TO DEEMPHASIZE REVOLUTION AND EMPHASIZE PRAGMATISM IN ITS FOREIGN RELATIONS TO AN EVEN GREATER EXTENT THAN IT DOES TODAY.

9. IN THE MEANTIME, WE PROBABLY FACE AN EXTENDED PERIOD DURING WHICH THE PRC WILL HAVE TO KEEP ITS FOREIGN POLICIES AT LEAST MINIMALLY CONSISTENT WITH A"REVOLUTIONARY" POSTURE, AND WITH A COMMITMENT TO THE ULTIMATE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD ORDER. NOVERTHELESS, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF MITIGATING FACTORS.FIRST, IT IS WELL-ESTABLISHED PART OF THE CHINESE CONSENSUS THAT

REVOLUTIONS ABROAD WILL AND MUST SUCCEED ON THEIR OWN, WITH A MINIMUM OF OUTSIDE SUPPORT. SECOND, WORLD REVOLUTION HAS LOWER PRIORITY THAN THE DISPUTE WITH THE SOVIETS, AND THE CHINESE PROBABLY SEE AS MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO HURT THE SOVIETS THROUGH FORMAL DIPLOMACY(EG THROUGH PLAYING UPON THE NATO COUNTRIES' FEARS
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OF THE USSR) AS THROUGH OUTBIDDING THE SOVIETS FOR FAVOR AMONG THE MILITANTS. THIRD, IMPORTANT AS IDEOLOGY IS, PARTICULARLY IN THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE, REVOLUTIONARY GOALS NEED NOT AND DEMONSTRABLY DO NOT ALWAYS OUTWEIGH THE VARIOUS PRAGMATIC NATIONAL INTERESTS WHICH THE CHINESE MUST SEEK TO PROTECT AND ADVANCE THROUGH PEACEFUL DIPLOMACY, TRADE, ETC. SOME OF THESE CHINESE INTERESTS WOULD BE THREATENED BY PRC BEHAVIOR THAT TENDED TO ALIENATE THE US IN MY OPINION, UNITED STATES DIPLOMACY TOWARD CHINA SHOULD RELY PRIMARILY UPON SUCH PRAGMATIC NATIONAL-INTEREST FACTORS;--FOR EXAMPLE UPON THE PRC'S GENUINE NEEDFOR TRADE AND SCIENTIFIC CONTACTS WITH THE US, AND ITS HOPE FOR US ACQUIESCENCE IN THE ULTIMATE REUNIFICATION OF TAIWAN WITH THE MAINLAND. THESE FACTORS LIE MUCH MORE WITHIN THE SPHERE OF OUR ABILITY TO CONTROL WITH PRECISION AND AT A MODEST COST THAN DO THE FACTORS INVOLVED IN POWER RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE GREAT POWERS.
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